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THE Ph.D. SHOULD BE REFORMED

Remarks of Professors Millett, Spencer, And Warren At Washington Meeting

Fred B. Millett, Wesleyan Univ.

That there is something radically wrong with the training graduate schools give prospective teachers of English may be inferred from easily available evidence as to how experienced teachers of college English spend the time left over from their purely pedagogical pursuits. As the recent meetings of the Modern Language Association, for instance, one could—if one were sufficiently nimble—hear papers on topics as irrelevant to serious literary study as "The bibliographical value of offset," "The use of the adverb in Gaelic," "Narrow, broad, and phonemic transcriptions," and "The social setting of hypocoristic (baby talk)." Such an expenditure of human energy might very well be regarded as a relatively harmless form of self-indulgence, if the authors of these articles were not, in the first place, products of our graduate schools and, in the second place, professional teachers of literature.

In order to consider seriously the shortcomings of the training the graduate schools give prospective teachers of college English, we should ask, first, what kinds of training for literary study might be given and, second, which of these kinds of training are and are not given satisfactorily by our graduate schools.

In answer to the first question, we may say that there are five major kinds of training that have a greater or less pertinence to literary studies. The first, and perhaps the least pertinent, is the bibliographical. In the bibliographical study of literature, the literary work is considered, primarily, as a physical object, and the student is concerned, not with the possible intellectual or spiritual significance of this object but with the process by which it achieved physical existence and with its relationship to other almost identical physical objects. No one would deny that the bibliographical study of literature has its values, but those values are extremely remote from, and irrelevant to, the teaching of college English. Indeed, there is some danger that even in the scholarly study of literature, the current almost Alexandrian emphasis on bibliography may be exaggerated. As Professor B. Ifor Evans has said, "English scholars will soon have to decide whether bibliography is a servant of the arts, or a rodent eating at the heart of the humanities."

The second type of scholarly training for literary study is the linguistic. This type of training is obviously more relevant to the study of a literary work of art than the bibliographical, since it is concerned with the study of the stuff — words — out of which the work of art is built. But the danger of this type of study is that it tends to become an end in itself, and that language comes to be considered, not as a medium for the creation of literature but as a series of complicated phenomena the study of which is regarded as intrinsically rather than extrinsically significant.

The third type of training in scholarly study — and the one which receives the major emphasis in graduate schools today—is the historical-biographical study of literature. This type of study is obviously concerned with relating a literary work, on the one hand, to the period in which it was produced, and, on the other hand, to the man who produced it. This kind of study may be very illuminating. The danger that resides in it is that it may come to be regarded, not as one form of knowledge, but merely as a method of study, and that, as a method of study, it may — without critical safeguards or considerations — be applied even more easily and successfully to tenth-rate authors and works than to first-rate authors and works.

The fourth type of training for literary study is the philosophical, and it will hardly be denied that this approach to the study of literature is the one that is most neglected by our graduate schools. The philosophical approach to literature is that which concerns itself with the philosophical (including the ethical) implications of the ideas or doctrines in works of literary art and with the consistency or the inconsistency, the order or the disorder of these implications. It investigates itself further those usually unexamined assumptions that the imaginative writer makes in the fields of epistomology and metaphysics.

The final kind of training for literary study is the aesthetic-critical. The aesthetic-critical approach to literature is the study of it in the framework, first, of an aesthetic, and, second, of a theory of criticism based on an aesthetic. If literature is an art and is to be taught and understood as an art, it would seem obvious that this way of studying literature is the one that graduate schools ought to keep first—first, last, and all the time. This is the method of studying literature of which the objective is the solution of the basic problems involved in one's relationship to a literary work, not as a collection of bibliographical or linguistic phenomena and not as a footnote to either history or biography but as a literary work, and these basic problems are two: comprehension and evaluation.

This analysis of the different ways in which literature may be studied is pertinent to our inquiry into the training of teachers of college English because it is obvious that the products of the graduate schools will — in nine cases out of ten — emphasize in their undergraduate teaching the ways of studying literature in which they themselves have been trained in the graduate school. Let us consider then, in the light of this analysis, the emphasis that American graduate schools have been wont to place on one or another of these ways of studying literature.

On the basis of over a generation's acquaintance with American graduate schools, I should hazard the generalization that, in the main, they do an excellent job in training students in the first three ways of studying literature — the bibliographical, the linguistic, and the historical-biographical, and that they do a very unsatisfactory job—in the main—in training students in the philosophical and the aesthetic-critical study of literature.

Certainly anyone whose experience of graduate schools covers a generation will agree with me that there have been some slight

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New England Meeting Postponed

It has been found necessary to postpone the meeting of the New England section of C.E.A. until next October.

Election of Officers

The slate of officers proposed by the Nominating committee was overwhelmingly approved. On the 115 ballots returned, there was but one dissenting voice. The editor hopes to have an address from President Shepard for the March NEWS LETTER.

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GROUP PLAN . . .

English departments are widely criticized for failure: it is said they lack vitality; their students do not want to read; their students cannot write. A good result of this criticism has been the current, widespread examination of the purpose and emphasis in undergraduate English teaching. But no course is better than those who teach it, and English teachers must be highly competent to develop the skills and understanding which are their peculiar province. Unfortunately, too many students in English courses get instruction from the inexperienced and the ineffective who are traditionally assigned to the swollen elementary courses in which the department assumes the whole burden of making all students literate. May not English departments have invited criticism by assuming a burden not wholly their own, and by thrusting it too often on those who could not bear it well? If so, they cannot continue in this false position without stultifying themselves. And to escape from it, must they not distribute their burden more widely, and make sure that what they retain is well supported? Specifically, must they not promote a more general feeling of responsibility for student literacy among their colleagues, and teach no more students than they can teach well?

To improve the general quality of teaching, it has been suggested that a **group** of sections be assigned to a **group** of instructors, say twelve sections to four instructors. The most experienced and effective instructor would do most of the actual classroom teaching, perhaps as much as twenty-four hours a week, but would be relieved of most theme correction and conference work by the junior members, who would be under his supervision. Each junior member would be assigned to specific sections, would teach perhaps an hour a week in each section to which he was assigned, but would attend all meetings of those sections. In addition to providing more experienced instruction, this plan makes possible a workable scheme of apprenticeship and supervision, and its adoption might well reduce greatly one of the recognized evils in the present system.

Propositions

Reading good books should give pleasure.

Intelligent readers of good books mark the relation between literature and living.

Vital teaching should stimulate this pleasurable "assemblage of ideas."

To write well is to assemble ideas in clear, forceful language.

The whole duty of the undergraduate English teacher is to stimulate intelligent pleasure in good books and to develop good writing.

The undergraduate English teacher should be well prepared to do his duty well; he should keep his duty ever before him; he should be rewarded for doing it.

All in favor . . . . . ?

Those opposed . . . . . ?

"World Lit" – One Way to "One World"

Under the shadow of Persepolis I stood one night in 1937, lonely and disturbed. As a young off-season tourist-hobo I had spent the day scrambling over the magnificent ruins of Darius' palace; but now it had turned dark and cold, and the alleged bus was hours overdue. Diffidently I trudged down to the shabby caravanserai fronting the highway below the huge stone terrace where a few gaunt broken columns still slotted the blue-blackness of the starlit Persian sky.

On a rug before a glowing charcoal-brazier in the courtyard two Iranian natives squatted, while a third plump shopkeeper, a small book in his hand and his opium-pipe behide him, emitted from his beard the intricate syllables of a reedily wailing chant. An old memory nudged me, and when the lyric quavered to an affable silence I walked up and—trying to make my "kh" scund properly glottal—ventured, "Omar Khayyam?"

The faces of the three Iranis wrinkled into grins as they looked up at me, but they shook their heads. The singer pointed to his worn volume and said proudly, "Hafiz!"

Hafiz! When I nodded my head delightedly, they moved to make a place for me beside the fire; in a moment I was sipping steamy Persian tea through the inevitable rock-sugar lump, fast friends with these villagers through a shared cultural talisman — though we didn't know a word of each other's language. That midnight they helped me flag down a truck, and as we thundered north for Ispahan I murmured to myself, "Hafiz you old devil," blessing the earnest white-haired prof who in "Lit 233" had assigned me a moral of Persian verse in translation to study, a half-dozen years before.

And now, ten years later, as Iran's catastrophic tensions draw the irritated focus of American newspaper readers—"Who the hell cares about those lousy Persians anyway?" — I remember that ecstatic gleam on the face of that bearded Irani as he sensed my recognition of his beloved poet's name. Persians are human beings to me now, and I care—ultimately, perhaps, because of Hafiz!

Yes, and I'm humbly trying, by the use of a few lyrics translated from Hafiz and Sa'adi, the "Rubaiyat," and a couple of tales from "The Arabian Nights," to make the Near East mean something more vital to my thirty-seven college sophomores than a medley of cats, prayer-rugs, and opium-fiends undergirded with petroleum. Similarly, by a sampling of Confucius' "Analects" and some haunting lyrics from "The Book of Songs" we are together trying to see the essential wisdom and humor and beauty of the Chinese spirit in perspective behind the famine-filth of that bedraggled heroic nation today; Don Quixote's gallant tilt at windmills helps us in class better to sympathize with the Spanish writhing under Franco's grip; and to neutralize the returned GI's tales of grasping, war-worn bitter French we are finding valuable Montaigne's shoulder-shrugging honesty, Voltaire's scalpel in "Candide," the naive charm of "Aucassin and Nicolete," and even a touch of the bawdiness of Rabelais. This year, in short, responsive to the urgent "one-world" need for intercultural understandings today, our college has switched its compulsory sophomore year in English from the usual Beowulf-Browning survey to this march through thirty centuries of world masterpieces which I (often only a few steps ahead!) am endeavoring to lead.

I firmly believe that this sophomore Cook's tour of world masterpieces from the Rig-Veda to Tolstoi, though not conducted primarily for "propaganda," neverthe-

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less can break down students' prejudices and remove barriers to intercultural sympathies as no pontifical "hands-across-the-sea" lectures could do.

One student in my class is momentarily provoked to find Confucius essentially anticipating Jesus' "Golden Rule" in a passage dictated five hundred years earlier; yet even this slight discovery has altered her concept of the Chinese as a person. A boy in the back row who as a "math major" affects boredom with English wrinkles his brow over Pascal's theorem of odd-or-even infinity as analogy to a "cosmic bet" on the existence of God. "I'll have to go over that page again," he mutters. "I thought French writers only turned out stuff like Mopey's-aunts' bedroom stories." An ex-GI fresh from six months' occupation-duty in Germany shakes his head bewilderedly at the wise humanity of Goethe's "Faust," the fiery anti-fascism of Heine, and the proletarian sympathies in Hauptmann's "The Weavers." "Guess I'll give those krauts a few years to get back in the groove—there's some good solid stuff in their own tradition if they'll dig for it," he decides. Another veteran, full of lurid anecdotes of dirt and degradation from his observations in India, sees a new aspect of the Hindu heritage when he absorbs a little of the "Bhagavad Gita" and yields to the rhythmic wisdom of Tagore's modern "Gitanjali."

Here's a feasible and concrete method whereby English teachers can do their share to foster intercultural relations. Let our CEA urge some authoritative body, like the Association of American Colleges, to advise all its member institutions whose curricula include a required second year of "English" to convert this course immediately—beginning in September—into a strong World Masterpieces Survey, staffed by their best instructors. If six hundred colleges and universities this autumn channelled two hundred thousand sophomores (many of them GI's fresh from disillusioning one-sided experiences in European or Asian countries) into six or eight semester-hours two-thirds of which was devoted to European and Oriental literary gems in traslation, think of the seminal currents of new awareness, sympathy, and intercultural insight that might be generated upon American college campuses, spreading therefrom into home and communities!

Ben W. Fuson
Lynchburg College

Ready, March 1947

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I've Been Reading

Baldensperger's Sonnets

LES SONNETS DE SHAKESPEARE, Traduits en ver français et accompagnés d'un commentaire continu, par Fernand Baldensperger (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1943).

Baldensperger's *Sonnets* has four main attractions: it presents yet another arrangement of the sonnets, it carries on a running biographical comment, it records a host of parallel passages from ancient, medieval, and renaissance writers, and it offers a translation into French of the world's most famous sonnets. For the third and fourth of these, it is a rewarding and important book.

Every critic, I suppose, is entitled to arrange Shakespeare's sonnets in a new order, just as Kittredge taught us that your Hamlet is not my Hamlet. But the critic must not then be annoyed by amused tolerance or flat refusal to be converted on the part of others. Thus Baldensperger's exact reversal of the order of CXXVII-CLIV (with the removal to another context of CXLVI) is open to ridicule, and his splitting of XXIX and XXX so that XX comes in between suggests that the meaning of the poems as wholes has escaped him. To be sure, in classifying the sonnets he has found the major themes (the dark lady, remedies for absence, for example). But with Shakespeare there is always more than one way of cutting the cake, and you often find yourself wondering why Baldensperger put this sonnet in this section and not in another.

Sometimes you understand his choice when you come to read the biographical chronicle: he is spinnig an elaborate, novelistic account of Shakespeare's and Southampton's relationships. The quality of some of the arguments appears in the observation that Berowne, Benedick, and Bertram have names begining with Be and so had Bevis de [Sout] hampton. But the story is at times plausible and always makes good reading.

It is not fair, however, to dwell on the biographical parts of the book. Baldensperger's vast reading, such as American scholars do not characteristically achieve, has enabled him to show how Shakespearean motifs appear not only in Sidney and Constable, in Ronsard and Desportes, in Tasso and in the much neglected sonnets of Michelangelo, in Ovid and Catullus, but also in the Jesuit Southwell's *Triumphs over Death* and verses of Marianus Scholasticus in the Greek Anthology. These parallels often illuminate the sonnets as nothing else can, sometimes through explaining the words, sometimes by revealing contemporary and traditional attitudes which have not survived today, and sometimes by tracing the history of poetic wit.

But the great achievement of the book is the translation—beautiful French poems with delicacy, vigor, and *esprit*. Read aloud, they capture both your mind and your heart, and though their form is rigid, they are always fresh and pungent. Baldensperger chose a scheme of abba abba, a quatrain of cdcd or cddc, and a couplet ee. This concession to the French pattern is bound to violate the essential Shakespearean organization of three parallel quatrains and a couplet. This and the fact that you simply cannot translate all the figures (e.g., the Will-will puns) are the only real departures from the original. The wonder is that Baldensperger preserved so much of the imagery, so much of the meaning, and so much of the wit of the original and with them blended the music of his own language and the artistry of his poetry.

Albert Howard Carter
Folger Shakespeare Library

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changes in emphasis in the last thirty-three years. The very heavy emphasis on the linguistic training of candidates for the doctor's degree has, fortunately, been modified. It is no longer considered necessary that a person who is going to devote his life to teaching Freshman English, a Sophomore survey course, and an advanced course in Shakespeare or Victorian literature should have a grounding in Gothic, Old Norse, Old Icelandic, Old French, and Old English! Indeed, although I am probably being a little old-fashioned when I suggest that I should be willing to go as far as to require for the English Ph. D. a reading knowledge of both Old and Middle English, I am certainly encouraged by the rate at which even the most conservative of our graduate schools have sealed off some of the linguistic torture-chambers through which the academic initiate used to have to pass. If the graduate schools would now begin to pay serious attention to modern advances in semantics, linguistics might experience a genuine revival.

Most observers of American universities would also agree, I believe, that, with the lessening of the emphasis on linguistic training there has been a slight increase in the emphasis on the aesthetic-critical study of literature. There are various reasons for this shift in emphasis: the exhaustion—for traditional scholarly purposes—of the older periods of English literature, the pushing on by teachers (and students) into more recent periods where critical problems are more obviously pressing, the reactions—even in the heart of the graduate schools—against the traditional training, and the appearance there of a number of distinguished critics—and even creative writers.

All this is doubtless encouraging, but if one considers what is going on in all except the absolutely first-rate graduate schools, one realizes that most of them are still hopelessly devoted to emphasis on ways of studying literature that are less relevant to literature than other ways that might be cultivated. Since literature belongs to that form of knowledge that is called art, it would seem obvious that the way of studying it most pertinent and likely to be most revealing is the aesthetic-critical. This is the kind of training that the teacher of college English most sorely needs, since, if he does not get it, he is likely to operate on the basis of an aesthetic that is shaky and inconsistent and to criticize on the basis of a theory that is unsystematic and unsound.

To illustrate the inadequacy of the merely historical approach to a literary work, I may conclude these remarks by quoting, first, the exquisite work itself, then Sir Edmund Chambers' historical observations on it (in his **English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages**), and finally Professor B. Ifor Evans' critical comment on Sir Edmund and on the poem.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley
The falcon hath borne my mate away,

He bore him up, he bore him down;
He bore him into an orchard brown.

In that orchard there was a hall
That was hanged with purple and pall

And in that hall there was a bed
It was hanged with gold so red

And in that bed there lyeth a knight
His wounds bleeding day and night

By that bed's side there kneeleth a maid
And she weepeth both night and day

And by that bed's side there standeth a stone
"Corpus Christi" written thereon.

All that Sir Edmund has to say of this poem, in addition to the fact that it is outstanding and obscure, is that it "is in more than one way abnormal. The 'lully' refrain seems inappropriate, since it is not a lullaby, and the chivalric setting is unusual."

"There is no recognition," Professor Evans rightly says, "that one has stepped outside the historically important into the presence of one of the most beautiful of mediaeval lyrics, in which a chivalric and Christian setting unites with a gesture that has a domestic pathos, to reveal the tragedy of Christ's death."

Theodore Spencer,
Harvard University.

I think all of us this evening are in agreement about what we need to do to improve the training given in the graduate schools to our prospective teachers of English. It seems to me that we have reached a turning point as far as graduate education is concerned. For the past three generations our graduate education has, in theory, been under the domination of science. Science gave us an inferiority complex, and we tried to imitate scientific methods in dealing with subjects to which those methods do not essentially apply. We have emphasized literary sources, literary types; we have tried to classify and arrange, and the result has been that we have neglected the most important part of our subject; we have neglected value; we have tended to think, in graduate study, of all facts about literature as being equally important, and we have not stopped to ask ourselves the really relevant questions. Our graduate education has tended to be mechanized as a result of our attempt to turn into a science what is not a science and as a result, we have become the victims of what Professor Whitehead calls "inert ideas"; ideas that no longer are supple enough to be adjusted to experience; we have become the victims of technique.

But at the present time, particularly in the last two or three years, science itself has developed an inferiority complex. Like Dr. Faustus, science has discovered that the pursuit of knowledge eventually involves the problem of evil, and the problem of evil is perhaps the greatest of all the problems of value, the problems with which the humanities deal. The scientists have had their uninhibited spree, and they are suffering from headache. They are being forced to look for something more constructive, more useful, than what they have been looking for in the past and they are turning to the humanists to see what we can offer them. Unfortunately the kind of student we have been training in our graduate school under the domination of the scientific ideal cannot help them very much. It is as if an artist, having lost his inspiration, should turn to one of his imitators, and say, "Tell me what to do." The imitator having only his master to imitate cannot help that master when the master fails. It is therefore all the more necessary for us to reassert our own values, to think seriously and continually about the true function of the humanities, to become masters, not pupils, and to train our graduate students in a way that will be truly humanistic. We have got to go further, in my opinion, than either Mr. Millett or Mr. Warren have suggested, and the first thing we must do is to try to attract to our grad-

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uate schools the best possible type of student who will study literature in its own terms, not in the terms of science, and who will be able to communicate the results of his study so that the values inherent in them may be creative.

If we can attract such students (and there is no known way of doing so except by emphasizing the importance of the values which our training should give) they should be given in our graduate schools a fairly free hand as far as their training is concerned. In fact it does not matter very much what the actual course requirements are, as long as they are not too philological; the really good student will project into whatever courses he is required to take, his own eagerness and his own standards. Furthermore, I believe that at the present time in most of our graduate schools the curriculum is so arranged that a really first rate man with ideas of his own can do pretty much what he wants. The important thing is to give him the courage of his convictions. Most graduate students seem to be by nature a timid bunch; they accept far too readily the mechanical requirements that exist, if they only knew it, chiefly to be expanded and fulfilled by the student's own ideas, not to be obeyed with a mechanical and frightened literalness.

But the good man, the man with the courage of his own beliefs, should also be given something positive; he should at least be led along certain paths. And here I have three concrete suggestions to make.

In the first place I think that every graduate student in English, before he gets his doctorate, should be required to show a constructive mastery of one of the major figures in English literature. I wouldn't give him a wide choice. He should have to choose among Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth. He ought to know not only the works of these authors as intimately as possible, but he ought to know also a good deal about what has been written concerning them, and he ought to be able to know what is good and what is bad in this secondary material. Far too often our graduate students go out to teach literature with only a most superficial contact with greatness in literary expression. The criterion of Excellence has never been held before them as they have grubbed for minor details in the book stacks.

In the second place I don't think that anyone should be allowed to teach English literature unless he or she has had some practice in creative writing. All graduate students in English should be required to write in various verse forms to write short stories and critical, not "scholarly," articles so as to have some awareness of the problems involved. If this requirement should be put into effect a lot of nonsense that now clutters the pages of learned journals about sources and techniques would stop being written. It seems to me as absurd to expect someone who has never composed anything himself to teach literature as it would be to expect someone to teach music who had never played a musical instrument.

In the third place I would suggest that no one be sent out to teach literature whose ability as a teacher had not in some way been tested. I realize that there are difficulties involved. In a large graduate school it is virtually impossible for the faculty to find time to listen to a formal lecture by every graduate student, and I am not at all clear as to when, in his graduate career, the student should be tested. But I believe that the ability to present a subject in an orderly and interesting way, in a way that disguises essence from accident, could be tested much more frequently than it is now inside the individual graduate courses. Teachers of graduate students are frequently not firm enough. Just as the student is timid in relation to the professor, so, perhaps in a different way, is the professor timid before his student. He does not want to hurt the student's feelings by telling him that he reads Milton with a whine, or that his method of delivery is boring to his audience. But students need to be told these things and to have their weaknesses corrected if they are going to do the work that education in the future will increasingly require of them.

The thought of that requirement brings back to what I was saying at the beginning. We must throw off the yoke that science once put on our shoulders, and which we should never have submitted to. The situation is now reversed and it is not sufficient to look beseechingly at science when science is looking beseechingly, if not desperately, at us. If we attract to our graduate schools the right sort of student, (and here, I repeat, is our greatest problem) we should be in a position to discover just how we can best assume our responsibility as preservers and transmitters, not of a body of facts, but of a tradition of essential values.

Austin Warren,
School of Letters,
State University of Iowa.

The Ph.D. should be reformed in the direction of making its holder not a specialist in a "field" but a professional man of letters, one who knows the nature of literature, the modes of scholarship and criticism, one who, without recourse to impressionism and 'appreciation,' can analyze and discuss books with his classes.

Our present graduate curriculum offers two kinds of courses,—those in periods and those in great authors, both in practice illustrations of a loosely conceived literary history; and there is a tendency to think of compulsory courses in the chief periods and authors. This course theory of education and the exclusive rule of the 'historical method' should be challenged. The true function of a graduate school of literature is to acquaint literarily serious students with the aims and methods of literary study and to provide critical supervision of their reading and writing. Such a conception includes both historical scholarship and criticism (as Americans commonly use the terms) and refuses to distinguish between literature before the twentieth century and 'contemporary literature.'

For curricular requirements, we should plan types of courses. One would be a course in a period, which need not be restricted to a single literature: 'The Age of Reason,' or 'The Romantic Movement' should survey at least France, Germany, England, and America. A course in a single author provides, — should indeed necessitate,—close study and exegesis; but the authors thus selected need not be always the same, nor always the three or four masters, nor always authors from the remote past. There should be a genre course, which need not be so broad as 'The English Novel' but should certainly not turn into a series of isolated analyses. There should be a course in literary theory. There should be a seminar studying specific approaches to literature,—the biographical, the sociological. the ideological; studying the relations between literature and the fine arts, between literature and philosophy.

The doctoral thesis should be conceived of as flexibily as our conception of professional literary distinction. It is the most individual part of a man's professional training and should give the reader (not merely the official depart-

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mental 'reader') a real sample of its author's intellectual quality and direction. It should certainly not be assigned by the sponsoring professor as a subdivision of some topic upon which he is professionnally engaged; should, rather, be proposed by the candidate and ratified as suitable and intellectually profitable by the adviser. Length and documentation, — or degree of documentation,—should be flexible. Every topic has its own logic and its own length. Mere industry and endurance are not intellectual virtues; and the **fiches**—the 3 by 5 cards—ought not, even though pasted together, to constitute a book.

Should the thesis be printed, and if so, when and how? It, or some representative part of it, should be published rather soon after the awarding of the degree. It does not seem desirable that ten or fifteen years should go to a working over of the thesis, which may then become the author's sole publication. Apprenticeship should not be prolonged into middle age. If a man has no capacity for independent study and writing, let him discover it.

The success or failure of the doctoral candidate should depend much more evenly than is now the case on both thesis and general examination. The latter (both written and oral, and in time nearer to a week than to three hours) should be passed before active work on the thesis is begun. The general examination should be critical (i.e.. exegetical and evaluative)as well as factual and historical. At some schools, it may be stragetic to set separate papers, one historical and the other critical; but such a separation would be false if it should imply some real disjunction between history,—literary history,—and criticism.

THE THEORY OF LITERATURE by Austin Warren and René Wellek is nearing completion. The University of Chicago Press is publishing a volume of Professor Warren's critical essays in the fall.

* * *

Comment . . .

The good discussion at the dinner meeting in Washington, particularly as it emphasized the ominously obvious fact that we are not always recruiting able students who in the next generation will be able teachers, left, it seems to me, one point—perhaps in itself too obvious—unmade. That is that we have often, and with best of intentions, attempted to sell literature on the wrong terms.

Literature, let us say, is an art, which expresses itself through words, which are most often vehicles for ideas. which usually affect the social, moral, or religious thoughts, prejudices, convictions of those who are exposed to them. Often in following a sentence of that sort we have of necessity travelled backwards from the period which ends it, and have become so engrossed in the gratifying details of its qualifying clauses that we have too seldom reached its single independent element — that literature is an art. So perhaps one reason that literature seems unrecognized by many of our better students is that we have allowed it to become unrecognizable.

In borrowing techniques, methods, approaches from other disciplines we may have obscured, if not neglected, our essential core of literature. To our students we seem to have become historians, biographers, socioligists, economists, philosophers (even estheticians), psychologists. moral guides, or religionists, so that the voice of the man of literature (the critic, the teacher) has often been allowed to sound strangely like many other voices which say the same things more clearly and more pertinently. Our mimic students have loved it, for the illusion of knowledge it gave them; our keener students—for the very reason that they are keen—have left us for political science, history, philosophy, even physics, for what seems to them a more direct approach to what they have been led—and by us—to believe we are driving at.

But in spite of this, and in spite of Mr. Millett's brilliantly ironical attack on approaches to literature, it is not primarily a matter of our choice of the particular road by which we will travel toward our Rome. It is rather that we pause amid the opportunities of coming to it which are offered us today, to remember that the approach must not be, and must not even seem to be more important than the end approached. Our students must be allowed to realize that literature is not philosophy, or history, or a package of ethical teachings. It is. among other things, as T. S. Eliot tells us, "superior amusement," and—as someone else has said—when it ceases to be fun, whatever else it may be, it ceases to be as important as it was before. "People who are very serious about art," we have been told, "generally succeed in making it very trivial."

We must, then, go beyond our nineteenth-century apologies for literature that it is a way of life, a substitute for or an accessory to religion, an epitome of the best that has been thought and said, or the expression of the national culture of a people; that it is history made interesting, sociology made vital, or a series of exercises in applied psychology. Until we can let our students know that literature. while it may contribute to our knowledge of each or all of these, depends on no one of them for its existence, but can fly on its own sturdy wings, we shall continue to indoctrinate too many second-rate minds, and fail with too many of the best.

Lewis Leary,
Duke University.

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Dear Professor Fitzhugh:

As our Washington meeting closed I was on the verge of taking the floor and was only deterred by the conspicuousness of the uniform I wore and by the fact that you had just complimented the speakers and provided for immortalizing their remarks. It seemed though to be the time to follow the practice of a famous orator whose speech we used to memorize in what one speaker called the good old days, and to say that like the mariner emerging from a confusing storm who reads his compass we should revert to the basic proposition.

We discussed the training of college teachers of English. We have now no basic quarrel with the MLA; that quarrel was settled when we formed the CEA to do things the MLA does not do. formed a separate organization instead of being a subordinate group in the MLA. We must admit that thorough scholarly training is essential to such rich knowledge as gives rich teaching in interpretation of literature and even in composition to college students. In every sentence we express ourselves, our opinions or our views. These grow from our thought, and true thought is based on facts, else it is guesswork. It is the product of accumulation, evaluation, and comparison of facts. So we need the scholarship. But what the gentleman from Connecticut was saying was that we need something else.

I propose myself as a horrible example. In graduate school I had scholarship. I even had detailed bibliography under W. P. Trent and did much of it myself. It was even worse than that. My dissertation was to be an eighteenth century biography. When it was presented, it was so substantial for a university that required actual publication, that I was permitted to publish and present only the somewhat substantial bibliography. Put to teach at my own university, I had not been taught in the graduate school how to teach, nor any criticism, ethics, or philosophy either. I was not even told how to teach. I was given a handbook of grammar, a set of "representative essays," a room, a roll book, and a class, and went ahead. I was given a list of English "prose masters," a room, a roll book, and a class, and went ahead. My work was never coordinated with that of other sections. I was never guided or corrected or even observed by my superiors, although I learned years later that one of them had criti-

cized to others my "partisanship" toward certain authors.

That is the sort of process which the CEA can direct its influence to correct. We want rich scholarship on the classroom rostrum, but we want teaching ability too. We want, as Dr. Butler used to say, broad men sharpened to a point. We want teaching ability with training for the task at hand, and not too much training lest we lose our scholarship. One of the great faults of teachers colleges is that they require too great a proportion of "technique" courses as compared to "subject" courses. I recall Carlton Hayes once saying: "How can they teach them how to teach history before they have taught them history?" But there should be somewhere training and guidance in teaching, not merely throwing a teacher at a class room and saying: "Teach!" Even in the army we do not command: "Right, Face!" until we have taught the soldier Right Face. We even teach the sergeants how to teach Right Face. The teachers colleges have something there. They do teach technique; not enough of the graduate schools do. Not enough of the colleges require it. I have taught English in three universities and in all three I deplored the lack of coordination and control. As I said years ago in a little book on education and the army, in uniform I learned the value of uniformity. And I say this in spite of "academic freedom" — I who was between times active in the AAUP and president of a university chapter of the AAUP. Let us let the MLA emphasize pure scholarship (that is its field), just as we let the NCTE speak for all high school teachers if it wishes. We are interested in teaching English, and let us say our say on that in the colleges, and also in the high schools and the graduate schools as it affects teaching it in the colleges.

Narrowed thus, our aims can be attained in any one of these ways: (a) Let the graduate schools give instruction in teaching (including criticism as well as composition) to those who wish to teach in the colleges. (b) Let the colleges insist that they will employ as English teachers only those who have had instruction in teaching (in some teachers college if you insist) and in criticism. (c) Let the departmental heads indoctrinate and train their instructors so as to insure their having proper teaching technique and critical backgrounds before being thrown with text and roll book into a class room.

It strikes me that much of this last must have been done in some of the many-sectioned "civilization" courses. It is a pity that some of those who have taught the "English" parts of the Contemporary Civilization courses at Columbia during the past two decades could not have contributed to the Washington discussion. Perhaps they will, like I, do it in writing instead of viva voce. Why not ask them to do so?

Sincerely yours,
Elbridge Colby.

Cornell and The Zeitgeist

Last spring the Departments of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Cornell University which were interested in the teaching of literature—viz. Classics, English, Romance Languages, German, Speech and Drama) decided to subscribe to certain articles of confederation for the purpose of setting up a Division of Literature. To a certain extent such leagues are in the Zeitgeist; recent years have seen the creation for example of Divisions of Humanities and Divisions of Social Sciences on many campuses. The concentration on literature is perhaps less usual and may even be quite novel. It sprang somewhat from the conviction that with the dominance of science in the modern world, so dramatically exemplified by its application to war, the most dramatic and least productive of man's activities, that the time had come to affirm the validity of interests and pursuits which in the present as in the past may be more enlarging and fertile for the development of the spirit of man than any amount of dramatic destruction.

We do not feel that the creation of such a division is the final answer to the Atomic Bomb; we do not even want it to rival the appeal of science in its productive and benevolent role. We do want to affirm even if only in our own little world that there are values in life, not necessarily those of practical science, which may serve to complement the scientific approach and which indeed humanity must not neglect if science is to be truly benevolent. We had, too, other objectives more immediate and on a much lower level though not unrelated to our guiding purpose. We felt that in recent years overspecialization had become a danger; there was too great a possibility of the student (and the student implies the professor and together they imply the intellectual community) being led to the study of French Literature or of English Literature or of German Literature in the void, as it were, and losing track of their interrelations and the common intellectual heritage of all.

On this we were all agreed. But of course faculties being what they are and our precise goal being as yet not clearly defined we proceed with enthusiasm tempered by caution. We have by no means done away with the departments. They remain autonomous. The departmental majors are left intact. The division is a superstructure or more correctly a kind of interpenetration of the departments. We have set up a number of divisional courses in which various aspects of literature and human intellectual activity are studied from a broader point of view than the purely national one. We have devised a major which is firmly based on relatively intensive study of one or two national literatures (for we do not wish to encourage mere dilettantism) and which over and above those contains some Divisional courses intended to give the student an opportunity to survey his own special interest against a wider horizon. In addition, the pooling of our resources has enabled us to present a plan for honors study which previously we had not been able to extend to the really distinguished intellectual minority of our students. By allowing the division to share the burden we have also been already able to invite foreign scholars from other countries to join our faculty as visiting professors.

I think probably all of us who support the new Division would cheerfully admit that many details are purely experimental and there are yet many aspects of the program to be considered and reconsidered. Our key course, for example, starts only this coming term and we are not yet sure how much revision—we know it will be considerable—it will have to have before we find it answering to our ideal. We are in process of planning a "terminal course" which will call for much care and judgment and no doubt revision before we are through with it. We have always in mind that the Division must not be allowed to conflict with the proper sphere of the departments. Yet we feel that we have made a good start; the administration is well inclined, the students are interested, and indeed if nothing more ever came of it than the fact that members of the various departments, previously hermetically sealed from each other, now come together for the discussion of common problems and objectives, it would have been worth the effort.

The role of the English Department in all this of course is one of major importance. From the point of view of the English curriculum we feel that the possibilities of the study of other literatures will enormously enrich our students' enjoyment of purely English offerings. Courses in such fields as Romanticism or the Eighteenth Century or Literary Criticism given from the European point of view cannot fail to be of value to students whose primary interest is in English. Conversely, though in the past many students in other majors have of course gone in heavily for English electives, the Divisional organization enables us to offer them better guidance and indeed better courses for their purposes. Even as our own students will profit by the possibilities offered by the division, our instructors too will have freer scope for treatment of their specialties; for certainly all teachers of English of any maturity would be grateful to extend their field beyond the purely national or linguistic areas; in the past this has been done in a summary or even furtive fashion but it has of necessity been done. The new plan will encourage such broadening.

Functionally the English department has done much to foster the Division. The department is of course included in the Division and is represented on the directing committee. Indeed it has happened by chance that the Chairman of the Division is at present also the Chairman of the Department of English. The Department has turned over to the Division a number of courses, principally in Literary Criticism, that were divisional in nature even before the Division was born. And it stands by rubbing its hands with glee at the opportunities soon to emerge for Honors work of a tutorial nature in which the Department expects to have an important share.

So much for the general background. It might be of interest to some readers to summarize here the kind of course we are now offering in the Division and give some indication of our plan for major work.

At present our Divisional courses include the following: Medieval Literature, Modern Literary Criticism, Drama and the Theatre, European Fiction, and the like.

two plans. The first can be defined as a purely departmental major plus rather more guidance in electives than the department itself would have offered. The second is more truly divisional in nature: Alternative A calls for 24 hours in advanced courses in one national literature, observing approximately the departmental rules for a major; 12 hours in divisional courses; 6 hours in related subjects; European or appropriate national history, 6 hours in History of Philosophy or of Philosophical Ideas, or Foundations of Western Thought; and 6 hours in Bible or Classics,-whether in translation or in the original. Alternative B calls for 18 hours in advanced courses in one national literature; 12 hours in a second literature (Greek la-2b inclusive acceptable); 12 hours in divisional courses; and two of the three groups of related subjects as stated under Alternative A., 3.

The honors program is of course particularly noteworthy for the tutorials of Junior and Senior year aimed at preparing the student for a comprehensive examination.

I must say again that we are merely at the beginning. The courses listed in our divisional offerings are. with one or two exceptions, courses that have previously been offered under departmental auspices. Literature 1, as I have said is only starting. Just what will emerge in a few years of trial we cannot see for sure. Perhaps not what we would think now but certainly, we believe, something that will be of genuine profit to the cause of literature and its study.

Thomas G. Bergin,
Cornell University.

Tutorial System At Buffalo

The tutoral system of the University of Buffalo so far as I know is the only plan among American universities which offers individual instruction to all candidates for the B.A. degree. It has been suggested that members of the C.E.A. may be interested in the organization and functioning of this plan.

The present system developed from honors courses which were created in 1923 for superior students, in line with the continuous effort of the university to attain a maximum degree of flexibility and freedom. Under the honors plan, a selected minority of juniors and seniors pursued a program of study specially planned by their faculty advisors while the majority continued under the conventional system of acquiring credits in courses. In 1931, the faculty decided that a majority of the students of the university were competent to undertake tutorial work, and it was stated in the catalog that the faculty would admit to the Senior College "only those students who are willing and able to follow such a program." This does not mean that all juniors are automatically admitted to tutorial work; all sophomores who wish to continue in the university must make a formal application to their major department. Departments are not allowed to accept students with averages under C without permission of a Tutorial Committee composed of representatives of several departments. Students who are not approved by the committee are not admitted to the Senior College.

Once the student has been admitted to the tutorial system, his program is supervised by his major department. The mechanics of the system vary among the different departments, but in general the object of the system is to reduce the number of advanced courses and to substitute individual study supervised by a tutor.

In the English department, the student has a weekly conference of an hour's duration with his tutor. About ten minutes of this time is spent in the assigning of a research or critical paper for the next meeting. During the rest of the time, the student reads the paper assigned the week before, the tutor criticizes the paper, and the student defends it or asks questions. Although most tutorial assignments are directed toward a comprehensive examination which comes at the end of the senior year, they may consist of any subject or method of investigation to fit the needs or interests of the student. A systematic and orderly treatment of literature by chronology or types is usually given, but it is not impossible for a paper one week on eighteenth-century esthetic theories to be followed the next week by one on Middle English satire or on contemporary drama. Students usually receive from four to six hours credit for each semester's tutorial work. Students do not ordinarily work with any member of the department more than two semesters, and they are encouraged to change tutors at least once in order to encounter a variety of personalities and points of view. Advanced courses in the classical, romantic, and Victorian periods, and in Shakespeare, Spenser, and the novel are given, but the student is made to feel that his tutorial work is more significant than any course work.

The comprehensive examination, which covers three days, is both written and oral. The written examination is divided into two parts of three hours each, administered on consecutive days. The nature of the division varies from year to year: the two parts may comprise poetry and prose, form and idea, or material before 1700 and after 1700. On the third day the student is given an hour's oral examination based on the answers written on the previous two days. Between the written and oral examinations, he is expected to prepare for this oral questioning. At the beginning of the hour he is given an opportunity to correct any blunders he has made on the written examination, and after this he may be asked to define, defend or expand any statements he has made on his written examination. The examining committee usually consists of four members of the English department, at least one of whom has not had the student in tutorial work. Students who fail to pass the comprehensive examination, even though their course grades may be high, are not allowed to graduate.

In a recent *Report of the Curriculum Committee* (The University of Buffalo Studies, June, 1946), it was pointed out that the tutorial system is expensive, that it is unfitted for groups registered in certain pre-professional curricula and for students who are not capable of working by themselves. In spite of these limitations, however, the committee has expressed the unanimous opinion that "Whenever the situation permits a choice between the tutorial method and the course method, . . . for the work of the senior division, the tutorial method is more closely in line with the spirit of the University, and should be chosen."

Alfred Owen Aldridge
University of Buffalo

Correction . . .

Apologies to Professor Martz for the grievous offense of misprinting his first name as co-author of **New Developments at Yale** in the January issue. The name is Louis, not Louise.

The Teacher . . . Bliss Perry

"To-day I speak on bibliography,
The teacher said.—Reverberant t
the word,
A reedy rattling . . . as of dead
dry bones . . .
Our ears offended. — Names o
books, of bones!
An hour to waste in cataloguin
bones . . .
Or books! 'Tis sure, a teacher hold
from heaven
Clear title to the charnel-house o
time;
And thence drags grisly specimen
to shake
Before the dulling eyes of careless
youth.
Ah me! Can these bones live?

The teacher spoke . . .
And what the prophet saw, in days
long sped,
We saw again: The bones grew
each unto his
His fellow; then beneath our gaze
were clad
With comely flesh . . . stood up . . .
and
breathed the breath
Of life!
An hour of counting bones? —
Instead
Our souls conversed with God-
inspired men.

Cecil A. Rollins

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E. F. Bunge,
Head, Dept. of English,
Washburn Municipal
University,
Topeka, Kansas.